

CLAIMS

Listing of Claims:

1. **(Canceled)** A portable terminal having a first casing and a second casing, wherein the casings have respective first and second surfaces facing a user of the portable terminal, the portable terminal comprising:

a coupling mechanism coupling the first casing to the second casing and inclining the first casing relative to the second casing during at least an initial stage of rotating the first casing relative to the second casing,

whereby the surfaces substantially face the user when rotating the first casing relative to the second casing

and wherein the coupling mechanism enables the first and second casings to rotate around a first reference axis extending in a direction of thickness of the portable terminal.

2. **(Canceled)** The portable terminal according to claim 1, wherein the coupling mechanism has biasing means for biasing the first casing towards the second surface of the second casing.

3. **(Canceled)** The portable terminal according to claim 1, wherein the coupling mechanism has angle control means for varying an angle formed between the first and second surfaces during the relative rotation of the first casing and the second casing.

4. **(Canceled)** The portable terminal according to claim 3, wherein the angle control means maintains a constant angle formed between the first and second surfaces and increases the angle after the initial stage of the rotation from a position in which the first and second casings are superposed on each other.

5. **(Canceled)** The portable terminal according to claim 3, wherein the angle control means gradually increases the angle formed between the first and second surfaces after the initial stage of the rotation from a position in which the first and second casings are superposed on each other.

6. **(Canceled)** The portable terminal according to claim 3, wherein the angle control means has a guide provided respectively on the first casing or the second casing and a protrusion provided respectively on the second casing or the first casing and abutting the guide, and varying the angle between the first and second surfaces by sliding the protrusion on the guide with the relative rotation of the first and second casings.

7. **(Canceled)** The portable terminal according to claim 6, wherein the portable terminal has a depression mated with the protrusion at a location of the guide opposed to the protrusion when the first and second casings are superposed on each other.

8. **(Canceled)** The portable terminal according to claim 1, wherein the rotating mechanism has a first base member with a mounting hole fixed to the second casing and a second base member with a rotator fixed to the first casing and rotatably engaged with the mounting hole, wherein the second base member is pivotable around a pivot shaft perpendicular to an axis of the rotator by the pivot mechanism, wherein the first casing is provided with a protrusion and the second casing is provided with a guide abutted by the protrusion, and wherein the rotating mechanism has biasing means for biasing the protrusion to the guide.

9. **(Canceled)** The portable terminal according to claim 25, wherein the biasing means is an elastic body disposed with being elastically deformed between the second base member and the rotator so as to generate a biasing force for biasing the protrusion against the guide by means of a restoring force of the elastic body.

10. **(Canceled)** The portable terminal according to claim 25, wherein the second base member includes a locking plate fixed to the first casing and a cylindrical body integrally disposed at the locking plate, wherein the cylindrical body is pivotable relative to the rotating shaft perpendicular to the axis of the cylindrical body and penetratingly disposed, wherein the pivot mechanism is configured by coupling the second base member to the rotator with the rotating shaft fixed to the rotator so as to be perpendicular to the axis of the rotator; and wherein the biasing means is an elastic body disposed between the cylindrical body and the rotator so as to generate a biasing force for biasing the protrusion provided on the first casing against the guide provided on the second casing by means of a restoring force of the elastic body.

11. **(Canceled)** The portable terminal according to claim 25, wherein the second base member is a bracket having an uneven bearing fixed to the first casing, wherein the rotator has an uneven shaft protruding in a perpendicular direction to the axis of the rotator; wherein the uneven shaft passes through the uneven bearing to couple the bracket to the rotator so as to form the pivot mechanism, and wherein the biasing means is formed of an elastic body disposed between the bracket and the rotator so as to generate a biasing force for biasing the protrusion provided on the first casing against the guide provided on the second casing by means of a restoring force of the elastic body.

12. **(Canceled)** The portable terminal according to claim 25, wherein the second base member is a bracket having a through-hole fixed to the first casing, wherein a pair of uneven axial plates protruding toward the inside of the through-hole are oppositely disposed in the through-hole, wherein grooves engraved halfway in the axial direction of the rotator are oppositely disposed on a periphery of the rotator, wherein the pivot mechanism is formed by coupling the bracket to the rotator by passing the rotator through the through-hole of the bracket

and supporting the uneven axial plate of the bracket to be engaged with the grooves of the rotator; and wherein the biasing means is formed of an elastic body disposed between the bracket and the rotator so as to generate a biasing force for biasing the protrusion provided on the first casing against the guide provided on the second casing by means of a restoring force of the elastic body.

13. **(Canceled)** The portable terminal according to claim 25, wherein the portable terminal has a depression into which the protrusion fits at a location of the guide opposed to the protrusion in the configuration where the first and second casings are superposed on each other.

14. **(Canceled)** The portable terminal according to claim 1, wherein the coupling mechanism has positioning mechanisms at least in a position in which the first and second casings are superposed on each other and in a position in which one of the first and second casings is rotated substantially 180 degrees from the position.

15. **(Canceled)** The portable terminal according to claim 25, wherein the rotator is hollow and power or signal leads guided to the first casing and the second casing are passed through the hollow portion.

16. **(Canceled)** The portable terminal according to claim 1, wherein the first surface of the first casing facing the user includes a display unit and/or a speaker, and wherein the functions on the second surface of the second casing facing the user includes an operation unit and/or a microphone.

17. **(Canceled)** The portable terminal according to claim 1, wherein the coupling mechanism couples the first casing to the second casing so as to be pivotable around a second reference axis perpendicular to the first reference axis, wherein there is provided a depression on an opposed face of one of the two casings opposed to each other in the closed configuration

where the two casings are superposed on each other, and there is provided a protrusion inserted to the depression on the opposed face of the other of the two casings.

18. **(Canceled)** The portable terminal according to claim 17, wherein the two casings have substantially rectangular opposed faces; wherein the coupling mechanism couples respective ends of the two casings to each other, wherein the protrusion and the depression are provided at the other ends of the two casings; and the coupling mechanism includes biasing means for biasing the other ends of the two casings against each other in a direction of bringing the other ends close to each other, and guide means for spacing the other ends of the two casings apart in the direction of thickness of the two casings against a biasing force of the biasing means in conjunction with an action of rotationally opening around the first reference axis from the closed configuration where the two casings are superposed on each other, and for bringing the other ends of the two casings close to each other in the direction of thickness in conjunction with an action of rotationally closing around the first reference axis from the opened configuration where the two casings are spaced apart.

19. **(Canceled)** The portable terminal according to claim 17, wherein a side wall of the depression in the direction of the relative rotation of the two casings is an inclined face gradually broaden toward the opposed face from a bottom wall surface of the depression.

20. **(Canceled)** The portable terminal according to claim 1, wherein the portable terminal has a microphone or a speaker in the first casing.

21. **(Canceled)** The portable terminal according to claim 17, wherein the protrusion is an elastic body.

22. **(Currently Amended)** An opening or closing method for use in a portable terminal having a mechanism for coupling ends of a first casing and a second casing superposed on each other, and for opening or closing the portable terminal by rotating the first casing relative to the second casing with surfaces of the same side in the first casing and the second casing directed substantially in the same direction, wherein the first casing is relatively spaced away from the second casing at least in an initial stage of the rotation of the first casing and the two casings rotate around a first reference axis extending in the direction of thickness and one of said first and second casings is coupled to the other of said first and second casings so as to be pivotable around a second reference axis perpendicular to the first reference axis, and said casings are spaced apart by inclining one of said first and second casings relative to the other of said first and second casings around the second reference axis at least in an initial stage of the rotation of one of said first and second casings and the other of said first and second casings.

23. **(Currently Amended)** The opening or closing method according to claim 22, wherein an angle formed between the first casing and the second casing remains constant and then increases to reach a given angle when the first casing is rotated relative to the second casing by means of said the rotating mechanism after the initial stage of the rotation.

24. **(Currently Amended)** The opening or closing method according to claim 22, wherein an angle formed between the first casing and the second casing gradually increases to reach a given angle when the first casing is rotated relative to the second casing by means of said the rotating mechanism after the initial stage of the rotation.

25. **(Previously Presented)** A portable terminal having a first casing and a second casing, wherein the casings have respective first and second surfaces facing a user of the portable terminal, the portable terminal comprising:

a rotating mechanism coupling the first casing to the second casing and inclining the first casing relative to the second casing during at least an initial stage of rotating the first casing relative to the second casing,

whereby the surfaces substantially face the user when rotating the first casing relative to the second casing and wherein the rotating mechanism has a first base member with a mounting hole fixed to the second casing and a second base member with a rotator fixed to the first casing and rotatably engaged with the mounting hole, wherein the second base member is pivotable around a pivot shaft perpendicular to an axis of the rotator by the pivot mechanism, wherein the first casing is provided with a protrusion and the second casing is provided with a guide abutted by the protrusion, and wherein the rotating mechanism has biasing means for biasing the protrusion to the guide

26. **(New)** The portable terminal according to claim 25, wherein the biasing means is an elastic body disposed with being elastically deformed between the second base member and the rotator so as to generate a biasing force for biasing the protrusion against the guide by means of a restoring force of the elastic body.

27. **(New)** The portable terminal according to claim 25, wherein the second base member includes a locking plate fixed to the first casing and a cylindrical body integrally disposed at the locking plate, wherein the cylindrical body is pivotable relative to the rotating shaft perpendicular to the axis of the cylindrical body and penetratingly disposed, wherein the pivot mechanism is configured by coupling the second base member to the rotator with the rotating

shaft fixed to the rotator so as to be perpendicular to the axis of the rotator; and wherein the biasing means is an elastic body disposed between the cylindrical body and the rotator so as to generate a biasing force for biasing the protrusion provided on the first casing against the guide provided on the second casing by means of a restoring force of the elastic body.

28. (New) The portable terminal according to claim 25, wherein the second base member is a bracket having an uneven bearing fixed to the first casing, wherein the rotator has an uneven shaft protruding in a perpendicular direction to the axis of the rotator; wherein the uneven shaft passes through the uneven bearing to couple the bracket to the rotator so as to form the pivot mechanism, and wherein the biasing means is formed of an elastic body disposed between the bracket and the rotator so as to generate a biasing force for biasing the protrusion provided on the first casing against the guide provided on the second casing by means of a restoring force of the elastic body.

29. (New) The portable terminal according to claim 25, wherein the second base member is a bracket having a through-hole fixed to the first casing, wherein a pair of uneven axial plates protruding toward the inside of the through-hole are oppositely disposed in the through-hole, wherein grooves engraved halfway in the axial direction of the rotator are oppositely disposed on a periphery of the rotator, wherein the pivot mechanism is formed by coupling the bracket to the rotator by passing the rotator through the through-hole of the bracket and supporting the uneven axial plate of the bracket to be engaged with the grooves of the rotator; and wherein the biasing means is formed of an elastic body disposed between the bracket and the rotator so as to generate a biasing force for biasing the protrusion provided on the first casing against the guide provided on the second casing by means of a restoring force of the elastic body.

30. (New) The portable terminal according to claim 25, wherein the portable terminal has a depression into which the protrusion fits at a location of the guide opposed to the protrusion in the configuration where the first and second casings are superposed on each other.

31. (New) The portable terminal according to claim 25, wherein the rotator is hollow and power or signal leads guided to the first casing and the second casing are passed through the hollow portion.

32. (New) A portable terminal having a first casing and a second casing, wherein the casings have respective first and second surfaces facing a user of the portable terminal, the portable terminal comprising:

a coupling mechanism coupling the first casing to the second casing wherein the coupling mechanism enables the first and second casings to rotate around a first reference axis extending in a direction of thickness of the portable terminal and wherein the coupling mechanism couples the first casing to the second casing so as to be pivotable around a second reference axis perpendicular to the first reference axis;

and a pivot mechanism for spacing said casings apart by inclining one of said first and second casings relative to the other said first and second casings around the second reference axis at least in an initial stage of the rotation of one of said first and second casings and the other said first and second casings.

33. (New) The portable terminal according to claim 32, wherein the coupling mechanism has positioning mechanisms at least in a position in which the first and second casings are superposed on each other and in a position in which one of the first and second casings is rotated substantially 180 degrees from the position.

34. (New) The portable terminal according to claim 32, wherein the coupling mechanism has biasing means for biasing the first casing towards the second surface of the second casing.

35. (New) The portable terminal according to claim 32, wherein the coupling mechanism has angle control means for varying an angle formed between the first and second surfaces during the relative rotation of the first casing and the second casing.

36. (New) The portable terminal according to claim 35, wherein the angle control means maintains a constant angle formed between the first and second surfaces and increases the angle after the initial stage of the rotation from a position in which the first and second casings are superposed on each other.

37. (New) The portable terminal according to claim 35, wherein the angle control means gradually increases the angle formed between the first and second surfaces after the initial stage of the rotation from a position in which the first and second casings are superposed on each other.

38. (New) The portable terminal according to claim 35, wherein the angle control means has a guide provided respectively on the first casing or the second casing and a protrusion provided respectively on the second casing or the first casing and abutting the guide, and varying the angle between the first and second surfaces by sliding the protrusion on the guide with the relative rotation of the first and second casings.

39. (New) The portable terminal according to claim 38, wherein the portable terminal has a depression mated with the protrusion at a location of the guide opposed to the protrusion when the first and second casings are superposed on each other.

40. (New) The portable terminal according to claim 32, wherein the first surface of the first casing facing the user includes a display unit and/or a speaker, and wherein the second surface of the second casing facing the user includes an operation unit and/or a microphone.

41. (New) The portable terminal according to claim 32, wherein there is provided a depression on an opposed face of one of the two casings opposed to each other in the closed configuration where the two casings are superposed on each other, and there is provided a protrusion inserted to the depression on the opposed face of the other of the two casings.

42. (New) The portable terminal according to claim 41, wherein the two casings have substantially rectangular opposed faces; wherein the coupling mechanism couples respective ends of the two casings to each other, wherein the protrusion and the depression are provided at the other ends of the two casings; and the coupling mechanism includes biasing means for biasing the other ends of the two casings against each other in a direction of bringing the other ends close to each other, and guide means for spacing the other ends of the two casings apart in the direction of thickness of the two casings against a biasing force of the biasing means in conjunction with an action of rotationally opening around the first reference axis from the closed configuration where the two casings are superposed on each other, and for bringing the other ends of the two casings close to each other in the direction of thickness in conjunction with an action of rotationally closing around the first reference axis from the opened configuration where the two casings are spaced apart.

43. (New) The portable terminal according to claim 41, wherein a side wall of the depression in the direction of the relative rotation of the two casings is an inclined face gradually broaden toward the opposed face from a bottom wall surface of the depression.

44. (New) The portable terminal according to claim 33, wherein the portable terminal has a microphone or a speaker in the first casing.

45. (New) The portable terminal according to claim 41, wherein the protrusion is an elastic body.